

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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BRYCE YOKOMIZO
Director



December 28, 2004

Board of Supervisors

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TO: Each Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce', written over the printed name 'Bryce Yokomizo'.

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

**SUBJECT: ACTION PLAN TO ENHANCE SERVICES TO HOMELESS
CalWORKs FAMILIES (BOARD ORDER #61 – DECEMBER 14, 2004)**

On December 14, 2004, your Board instructed me to provide an action plan within two weeks for enhancing services to homeless families aided through the CalWORKs program, pursuant to a zero tolerance policy for homeless families on Skid Row. In response to this instruction, my Department has worked with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Community Development Commission (CDC), and Public Counsel to develop the attached action plan.

This plan is designed to respond to the needs of homeless families on Skid Row, enable families to leave Skid Row, and prevent homeless families from going to Skid Row. Accordingly, the plan includes both strategies which are specific to Skid Row and strategies which address the needs of homeless families on Skid Row and throughout the County.

The target date for implementation of this plan is January 18, 2005. The two strategies which involve funding for LAHSA (Skid Row Outreach Team and Emergency Housing) will require approval by your Board to transfer these funds to LAHSA, prior to their implementation.

This plan will be funded during FY 04-05 through the CalWORKs Single Allocation, which can only be used for families where an adult: (1) is receiving or has exhausted the time limit for CalWORKs cash assistance; and (2) is either employed or enrolled in the CalWORKs welfare-to-work program. Continuation of any or all of these strategies

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beyond this fiscal year will depend on the availability of funding next year and the effectiveness of these strategies in combating homelessness among CalWORKs families.

As we intend to evaluate these remedies and track families benefiting from these services, I will provide your Board with quarterly reports on the status and outcomes of this action plan.

BY:cl

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Public Counsel

ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCING SERVICES TO HOMELESS CalWORKs FAMILIES

Identifying and addressing the immediate needs of homeless families on Skid Row is the critical first step toward enabling homeless families to leave Skid Row and secure housing. The first two strategies are designed to enable homeless families on Skid Row to be identified by the service delivery system and to facilitate their access to the CalWORKs program and other services for homeless families.

Homeless Families Benefits Access Team

Estimated FY 04-05 Cost: \$140,000

Currently, Access Centers serve as one-stops for homeless families, providing many services, including case management, housing vouchers, etc. To apply for public assistance, however, homeless families must travel to a DPSS office.

To facilitate access to benefits and services for homeless families, DPSS will outstation eligibility staff at the Weingart Access Center in Skid Row to process applications for CalWORKs benefits and homeless services.

Skid Row Family Outreach Team

Estimated FY 04-05 Cost: \$60,000

Homeless families in Skid Row are vulnerable, face overwhelming obstacles, and are without a cohesive system of services to address their many needs.

To identify homeless families on Skid Row and connect them to available benefits and services, LAHSA, DMH, and DCFS will create a Skid Row Family Outreach Team. This team will seek out families in Skid Row and link them with appropriate services. With the outstationing of DPSS staff at the Weingart Access Center, the outreach team will take families to the Access Center to process applications for CalWORKs benefits and homeless services.

Providing services exclusively to homeless families on Skid Row would be insufficient to solve the problem of homeless families on Skid Row. Therefore, an effective plan must provide key services throughout the County, so that homeless families who leave Skid Row can still receive the services they need and homeless families can receive services in their own communities without migrating to Skid Row. The following strategies strengthen the continuum of care for CalWORKs homeless families countywide, by enhancing the emergency shelter system, temporary homeless assistance, and permanent homeless assistance.

Emergency Housing and Services

Estimated FY 04-05 Cost: \$1.5 Million

Currently, many families are unsheltered nightly throughout the County due to a lack of funding, beds, and services. At this juncture, it not known how many of these families are CalWORKs eligible. However, to the extent funding is available to increase family shelter beds, provide more housing vouchers, and increase services, more families can be sheltered, many of whom are possibly either eligible to or already receiving CalWORKs.

To enhance the availability of emergency housing and services for homeless families, DPSS will provide additional funding to LAHSA for eligible CalWORKs families. This additional emergency housing and services will help up to 2,000 families during FY 04-05.

ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCING SERVICES TO HOMELESS CalWORKs FAMILIES

Temporary Homeless Assistance Extension

Estimated FY 04-05 Cost: \$1.5 Million

Currently, families are eligible for up to 16 days of CalWORKs Temporary Homeless Assistance (HA). With certain exceptions, once they exhaust this once-in-a-lifetime benefit, they cannot access the Temporary HA program again.

DPSS will supplement the State's Temporary HA program, providing an additional 14 days of Temporary HA. This 14-day supplementation will be available to homeless families currently accessing Temporary HA, as well as to those who have already exhausted the 16-day program. This additional two weeks of assistance will enable families to stay in hotels/motels longer while they continue to seek permanent housing. All other existing Temporary HA rules will remain in effect (e.g., must stay at a commercial hotel/motel, must provide receipts, etc.). It is estimated that approximately 2,700 families will benefit from this extension of the Temporary HA program during FY 04-05.

Short-Term Rental Subsidies

Estimated FY 04-05 Cost: \$1.0 Million

Currently, there is no rental subsidy in the State's CalWORKs program. With the County's high rents, homeless families often need rental assistance to remain housed once they have secured permanent housing. With the lack of Section 8 vouchers, this problem has been exacerbated.

To assist homeless families secure and retain permanent housing, DPSS will provide a short-term rental subsidy program. Under the program, families receiving Permanent HA or Moving Assistance (i.e., CalWORKs families who have just found permanent housing) could qualify for a rental subsidy of up to \$250 per family (based on family size) for four months. This subsidy will be the same as the rental subsidy provided to families served through the CalWORKs Homeless Families Project who are unable to access Section 8 vouchers. These funds will be issued through two-party checks to the participant and landlord. In addition, money management services will be offered to assist families in sustaining their housing and avoiding future homelessness. It is estimated that approximately 1,300 families will benefit from this short-term subsidy during FY 04-05.